



CONSUMER ALERT

810 FIRST STREET, NE, SUITE 701 | WASHINGTON, DC 20002 | WWW.DISB.DC.GOV

BEWARE OF HEALTH INSURANCE SCAMS POST-HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

On the heels of the passage of historic health insurance reform that promises to improve health care for all Americans, the D.C. Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) is warning all District residents to be on the lookout for scam artists peddling bogus insurance plans.

Scam artists and criminals may be using the passage of these historic reforms as an opportunity to confuse and defraud the public. Some hustlers are going door to door selling phony insurance policies, claiming there is a limited open-enrollment period to buy health insurance now. Not so. Be careful of people trying to convince you that you must act now.

According to DISB Commissioner Gennet Purcell, these types of scams are unacceptable as they threaten residents across the city. And in keeping with the urging by the Health and Human Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, DISB has redoubled its efforts to protect the city's residents, starting during the District's Financial Literacy Month in April.

Commissioner Purcell wants residents to be aware that there are new insurance options in the near future—a new high-risk pool program for those blocked out of insurance due to pre-existing conditions; and new insurance protections beginning the fall of 2010. However, consumers need to beware of policies that are time limited, offer limited benefits or advertise themselves as necessitated by health insurance reform.

How do I report a suspected incident of Insurance Fraud?

If you believe that you have been a victim of health insurance fraud, or if you are aware of an instance of insurance fraud, it is important to:

- Contact DISB at www.disb.dc.gov to file a complaint against the insurance company;
- Visit www.naic.org and complete the form provided by the Online Fraud Reporting System (OFRS).

Through the OFRS, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and state regulators are encouraging consumers to take a proactive role in identifying and reporting insurance fraud. Not only does this minimize future instances of insurance fraud, but it also reduces unnecessary insurance costs.

Stop. Call. Confirm.

If you are unsure about the insurance company or agent you are dealing with, do the following:

- STOP before signing any paperwork or writing a check;
- CALL DISB at (202) 727-8000
- CONFIRM the agent offering insurance is legitimate and licensed in the District of Columbia.

For More Information

The District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. **To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit www.disb.dc.gov or call (202) 727-8000.**